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December 16, 1970

Trip File

MEMORANDUM TO AL HAIG

FROM W. R. SMYSER

SUBJECT: Talking Paper for Your Meeting With President Thieu

PURPOSE

There are four main purposes to your call on THIEU:

-- to tell him the purpose of your visit.

-- to give him some impression of what you have found, so as to reassure him.

-- to discuss military plans.

-- to discuss political proposals.

YOUR POINTS

You may want to make the following points under these general headlines:

1. Purpose

-- The President asked you and members of your staff to take a look at the situation in Cambodia and Viet-Nam.

-- In line with this, you and your collaborators have visited the two countries, speaking to U. S. officials and to Cambodian and Vietnamese officials and political figures.

-- The President also asked you to express his warm personal greetings to President Thieu.

2. Impressions

-- We believe the situation in Cambodia is tenable, despite recent NVA pressures.

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-- The Cambodian government and people appear determined to defend themselves.

-- However, help will be needed, from the U. S. and South Viet-Nam.

-- We must make certain that frictions among Vietnamese and Cambodians, fomented by exaggerated rumors, are kept to a minimum.

-- As for South Viet-Nam, the military and pacification situations appear to be much improved, partly because of our Cambodian operations. — note exaggerations of enemy claims [illegible] — see always on Cambodia.

-- The economic picture is also improving, and we will continue to help.

-- The political situation also appears to be stable.

3. Military Operations

-- Describe our plans at your discretion and to the degree to which they have been elaborated during your visit.

4. Political Plans

-- President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger met with Vice President Ky during his visit to Washington.

-- From these discussions, and from Ambassador Bunker's earlier meetings with Thieu, we understand President Thieu is prepared to set forth some new political proposals.

-- We believe this is an excellent idea, and we are prepared to support President Thieu's proposals.

- Such proposals could have a positive impact in the U. S.

- We believe they could also have a positive impact in South Viet-Nam, especially in an election year.

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-- We believe it would be desirable to present political proposals, which would enhance the authority of the GVN and the permanence of the Constitution.

-- We also believe it would be good to present proposals which can be unilaterally implemented if the other side does not discuss them.

-- In this spirit, we have the following suggestions:

- That President Thieu offer to discuss with the NLF the conditions of its participation in the 1971 Lower House and Presidential elections.

- This is proposed as a major step to peace.

- This could be done in January, before our military operations.

- If they refuse to meet to discuss this, President Thieu in March or April could go further, unilaterally inviting the NLF to present candidates for the elections in addition to candidates already presented under the terms of the electoral law.

- At the same time, President Thieu could invite international observers to witness the fairness of the elections.

-- These are some of our thoughts. We defer to President Thieu's judgment on these matters. We hope that President Thieu will be able to have further meetings on this subject with Ambassador Bunker, and we shall welcome his ideas.